

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02536 302205Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2536

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, MPOL, HO
SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SITUATION

1. HONDURANS HAVE FOLLOWED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WITH INTEREST. THE SITUATION ITSELF IS DRAMATIC, WITH ITS REMINDERS OF 1965, AS WELL AS BECAUSE THE EXAMPLE HAS CLEAR, IF GENERALLY UNARTICULATED, IMPLICATIONS THAT WILL BE READ BY HONDURAN PRESS, POLITICAL PARTIES, PUBLIC AND NOT THE LEAST, THE GOVERNMENT.
2. BOTH PRESS AND RADIO HAVE REPORTED DEVELOPMENTS FULLY, BASED ON WIRE SERVICES. SURPRISINGLY, PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN USED AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR MORE EXTENSIVE PUBLIC COMMENTARY, EITHER FOR OR AGAINST. THIS MAY BE BECAUSE ALTHOUGH PROMISED, ELECTIONS IN HONDURAS WILL NOT BE UNTIL NEXT YEAR AT THE EARLIEST.
3. TWO WIDELY READ COLUMNISTS HAVE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON WHAT THEY VIEWED AS "U.S. INTERVENTION, BUT ON THE GOOD SIDE." ONE,
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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02536 302205Z

AFTER REVIEWING THE BEGINNING OF AN APPARENT GOLPE, SAID "THAT AT THAT MOMENT OCCURED THE MOST AUDACIOUS (AND APPARENTLY BEST)

INTERVENTION THAT PRESIDENT JAMES EARL CARTER HAS HAD IN LATIN AMERICAN POLICY." IN ADDITION, TWO PAPERS COMMENTED EDITORIALY. LA TRIBUNA MADE AN INDIRECT REFERENCE IN A MAY 26 EDITORIAL ABOUT MILITARY REGIMES, SAYING "THANKS TO THE BANNER OF

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RAISED BY CARTER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME MILITARY DICTATORS WILL BE OBLIGED TO VACATE THE POSITIONS THEY OCCUPY AGAINST THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE." LA PRENSA ON MAY 27 REVIEWED THE DOMINICAN SITUATION, NOTED THE CARTER/VANCE WARNINGS AND AGREED WITH PRESIDENT CARTER THAT "THE FAILURE OF DOMINICAN DEMOCRACY WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICAN ESPECIALLY IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE MILITARY GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEGUN THE PROCESS OF RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL REGIMES." MODESTO RODAS, LIBERAL PARTY LEADER, WHEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED BY A RADIO INTERVIEWER, CALLED THE CARTER STATEMENTS "POSITIVE" AND "OF IMPORTANCE FOR HONDURAS."

4. COMMENT: IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO BELIEVE THAT USG SUPPORT FOR THE DOMINICAN ELECTORAL PROCESS HAS GONE UNNOTICED HERE EVEN THOUGH COMMENTARY HAS BEEN LIMITED. IT HAS BEEN DULY NOTED, WHETHER WITH APPROVAL OR NOT. WHILE THE ABOVE EXAMPLES ARE POSITIVE, THERE ARE NO DOUBT ALSO THOSE WHO OBJECT, BUT WHO HAVE NOT DONE SO PUBLICLY. THE U.S. INITIATIVE WILL BE SEEN IN LOCAL TERMS, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THE DELAYS THAT HAVE OCCURED, INTENTIONAL OR NOT, IN DEFINING ELECTORAL PROCEDURES AND DATES. EVEN THOUGH NOT REFERRED TO SPECIFICALLY, IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO ENTER INTO THE CALCULATIONS OF THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS, CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, AS THE PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD BEGINS HERE.
JARAMILLO

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